







FEW REMARKS

ON A PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

"A FEW WORDS ON THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY,"

IN A LETTER TO ALEXANDER CHRISTIE, ESQ.,

GOVERNOR OF ASSINIBOIA

BY

ADAM THOM, Esq.,

RECORDER OF RUPERT'S LAND.



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RED RIVER SETTLEMENT,

23rd November, 1847.

ALEXANDER CHRISTIE, Esq.,  
GOVERNOR OF ASSINIBOIA.

MY DEAR SIR,

About the middle of October you did me the honour of submitting to me a pamphlet entitled "A Few Words on the Hudson's Bay Company," &c., under the impression that my local knowledge might enable their Honors more effectively to rebut the statements of the publication in question. In compliance with your desire, I now beg to lay before you the result of my consideration of the subject.

In order to do justice to both parties, I must blend with the merits of the case much that may not appear to have any direct bearing on the points at issue. This I regret, for, in the cause of truth, special pleading generally does more harm than good; but I must take the pamphlet as I find it. I shall however, be careful to distinguish the essential defence of the party assailed from the collateral deficiencies in candour and moderation on the part of the assailants: in other words, I shall exclusively base my practical conclusions, not on the short-comings of the Honorable Company's opponents, but on the policy of the Honorable Company itself.

I.

The pamphlet, on its title-page, professes to detail the grievances of the "Native and Half-caste Indians," "through their delegates, now in London."

This preliminary announcement, whatever might have been the intention of the writers, could hardly fail to convey to the reader a very erroneous impression of the actual facts.



The word "*now*," as applied to the presence of the delegates in London, would obviously lead one to infer, that the individuals in question had been specially sent home as the representatives of their countrymen—an inference which would be confirmed by the subsequent description of the same parties as "*delegates from the Natives of Rupert's Land*," and still more decidedly by the incidental mention of the circumstance, that one of the number had been "*under the necessity of returning to America*." Now, with the exception of the gentleman who had so returned, and who, in fact, was residing, at the date of the publication, in Red River Settlement, not a single person had ever left Rupert's Land on any such mission. With respect to all and sundry, therefore, the insinuation embodied in the very emphatic adverb was utterly inapplicable. Five of the six delegates, so far as the mission in question was concerned, had *always* been in London, while the sixth was not *now* there.

Nor were the constituents themselves more accurately defined than the delegates. The only parties whose deputies the framers of the book could pretend to be, were the signers of the petition from Red River Settlement. Now these people, whatever were the names of the thousand, spoke of themselves, in their second paragraph, and also of their fathers before them, as denizens of the colony, while in their third paragraph they distinguish themselves from the Indians; a distinction which also pervaded the whole of their somewhat unintelligible "*Instructions to the Messenger*." Thus of the two classes of the alleged constituency, Native Indians and Half-caste Indians, the former was purely imaginary. The petitioners described themselves as not being aborigines; and, according to the best of my information and belief, the petition was not signed by even one recognised member of an aboriginal tribe.

But, not contented with pressing the native Indians into the ranks of their alleged constituency, the authors of the publication did their best to array the actual signers of the petition

in the aboriginal uniform. In fact, the pretext as to the Half-caste Indians was almost as wide of the truth as the fiction about the Native Indians themselves. The petition was projected in the house of an Irish Catholic, while a Canadian priest occupied the chair; and the immediate cause which brought the meeting together was, a wish, at least in the minds of the many, to rescue from gaol a homicide of the same faith and origin as the landlord of the assembled "people." The petitioners, with few exceptions, were the Catholic inhabitants of the colony, partly pure Canadians and partly Canadian Half-breeds. Clearly the former could not be included among Half-caste Indians. Nor would the latter, any more than the half-breed delegates themselves, be disposed to submit to such a classification. If, in point of blood alone, they might be characterised as Half-caste Indians, they might on the self-same ground be characterised as Half-caste Europeans. But if the children of mixed race should be regarded without reference to mere parentage, they would be found, socially and civilly, and politically, to be altogether Europeans and not at all Indians.

Nor would the epithet "Half-caste" appear to be more applicable in the ~~premises than~~ the term "Indians." Its obvious allusion to the position of the mixed race of our Eastern empire, a race degraded in the estimation alike of both its stems, would, if fully understood on the spot, be condemned as equally false and offensive: the delegates could not prudently here address their countrymen in such terms; nor could they, without a feeling of just indignation, hear themselves so addressed in London. In proof of the equality among us of all creeds and all colours, of all races and all origins, I would state, that two of our three magistrates are half-breeds, respectively Catholic and Protestant in religion, and Canadian and English in connexion; and that the young of every class are almost exclusively of mingled descent, many of their mothers being of purely aboriginal blood.

Thus would all the romance of the title-page about "Indians" vanish before the light of facts, while the "delegates now in London" would be stript, if not of their distress, at least of their dignity, with its congenial accompaniments of beads and feathers, of calumets and blankets, of twisted locks and appended thimbles, of nose-jewels of tin, and necklaces of brass.

Though such a mass of gratuitous misrepresentation does not directly establish the propriety of the Honorable Company's proceedings, yet it does indirectly tend to do so, involving the admission, that the writers either violated truth without a motive, or distorted and varnished it as not being, in its naked simplicity, sufficient for their purpose.

## II.

In addition to "A Few Words on the Hudson's Bay Company," a portion of the pamphlet, which will be noticed hereafter, the "delegates now in London" saw fit to accompany the petition with a professedly explanatory memorial of their own. In this document, after claiming in general terms to be "delegates from the natives of Rupert's Land," they specially described themselves as being "entrusted with the duty of presenting the accompanying petition, &c."

Now, on the very face of the pamphlet, the petitioners nominated only one delegate with the rather peculiar title of "Messenger," or "Commissionary." This functionary, according to his unique "Instructions," was to communicate, in his own proper person, with the Secretary for the Colonies: he had no right whatever to delegate his delegated powers to any one else; and, even if he had chosen to overstep the limits of his authority, a man of his age and experience could not have justified to himself and his constituents the abandoning of the important interests at stake to the more youthful at least of the five memorialists. If the "Messenger" or "Commis-

"sionary" did assume the responsibility of requesting one of the number to act on his behalf, then that one, as if to extend the principle of delegation *ad infinitum*, must again have assumed the responsibility of dividing the honor and burden of the day between himself and his associates.

All this irregularity would have been nothing in itself. But the five gentlemen, instead of candidly avowing and boldly vindicating so immaterial a defect in their title, strove to trace their assumed character of delegates to the petitioners themselves. They even went the length of asserting, that the "Instructions to the Messenger" were "addressed to the delegate in charge of the petition," not for his own personal proceedings, but, forsooth, "for the guidance of the memorialists."

So glaring a perversion of a plain fact on the part of the five gentlemen must have sprung from some stronger impulse than the mere desire of concealing an informality in the mode of their appointment. They must have been conscious that they were not in the spirit, any more than in the letter, the deputies of the petitioners. Nor is this imputation a mere theory. Between themselves and their apparent clients there existed no community of feeling; and, if we might judge from the uniform example in the matter of their resident kindred, not one of the five would have signed in Red River the document which they so eagerly embraced in London, as a cheap ladder for a puerile ambition.

In strict accordance with this view of the case, the self-elected delegates have not transmitted a single copy of their pamphlet to their pretended constituents; while, as if to proclaim that vanity was more watchful than a sense of duty, one of the number has sent a few copies of his publication to a relative, who, as he well knew, was more likely to be proud of an author in the family than to sympathise with the contents of the book.

But we are not confined to negative evidence on this point; for, in the very memorial itself, the self-elected delegates

turned their backs on their pretended constituents. They spoke thus: "What little has been done for the religious and "moral improvement of the natives is wholly due to the "persevering exertions of the Church Missionary Society, "and, since the year 1839, of the Wesleyan Society of "London." In this passage the volunteer representatives of the Catholic population of Red River Settlement would appear, strangely enough, to have forgotten that there was such a thing as a Catholic mission in the country—a forgetfulness the more remarkable, inasmuch as the Canadian priest, under whose auspices, or rather by whose pen the petition and instructions were framed, had long been universally admitted to be the most indefatigable and zealous missionary in the land.

But the self-elected delegates were at issue with their pretended constituents as well in what they stated as in what they omitted. In the estimation of conscientious adherents of the Church of Rome, "the persevering exertions" of Protestant Societies could not be worthy of any high praise; and least of all, could they be so in the estimation of those, whose chairman, king and priest and prophet in one, had often devoted more of his time and talent to the depreciation of Protestantism than to the elucidation of Catholicism.

Thus would the five gentlemen appear to be representatives only of themselves. If they would have the candour to occupy this their true position, and then and there to restrict their philanthropy to the exposition of their own grievances, they could easily be shown to have less reason to complain of the unjust or ungenerous conduct of the Hudson's Bay Company and its servants than almost any other native or half-caste Indians, than almost any other shoots, whether simple or compound, of the aboriginal stem.

If, however, they should still prefer the honor of redressing aboriginal wrongs in general, let them avowedly stand forward as the unsolicited champions of their countrymen. A career of this kind, whatever one might think, under the peculiar

circumstances, of its modesty or its prudence, would not necessarily involve on its very threshold, the sacrifice of that ingenuousness, which could alone command the confidence of intelligent and dispassionate individuals.

### III.

Having thus cleared away the preliminary obstacles, I shall now offer some observations on that portion of the pamphlet, which professes to be,—

“A few words on the Hudson's Bay Company.”

To pass unnoticed the verbose inanity of the article,—an article, whose style is so singularly at variance with the brevity promised in the heading, the first six paragraphs treat of the grounds of the Company's authority and the last two of the results of its trade.

1. The substance of the first six paragraphs amounts simply to this, that the Company's Charter has been annulled by Act of Parliament.

In a book, given to the world by one Robson, about the middle of the last century, under the title of “Account of six years Residence in Hudson's Bay,” the writers of the pamphlet had discovered that a statute had been passed in 1690 to confirm the Royal Charter for seven years, and that, on its expiration, it had not been renewed; and they had further discovered that thus, in the opinion of the individual in question, his former masters had been “mean enough to keep the absolute possession of what they knew was become the property of the nation;” a conclusion, which, when substantially adopted into their own first paragraph, the five restorers of Robson's literature have characteristically enough, set forth as a “hitherto UNPUBLISHED fact.”

Now, the expiration of the Act of 1690, left Charles the Second's Letters Patent in their original position, so as not to exercise even the slightest influence on the question of the

legality or illegality of the Company's Charter. In applying, it is true, for a parliamentary confirmation of the royal grant, the parties interested did spontaneously admit that their rights might be put on a more satisfactory footing. But this admission referred, not so much to the chartered privileges themselves, as to the probable effect of the Revolution with its Bill of Rights on the chartered modes of maintaining the same; and even if such modes had been less stringent and summary, the admission in question might reasonably have been based on a desire of securing, without delay, under the new order of things, a parliamentary sanction, as the best guarantee against a parliamentary attack.

Subsequently to 1697,—the year, in which, according to Robson and his copyists, the Statute and the Charter fell to the ground together—the Company never again made any formal appeal to the legislature. This fact the pamphleteers describe as “no less certain than extraordinary.” Now, even on their own showing, there was really nothing of an “extraordinary” character in the case. With reference to the Act of 1690, they thus deliver themselves:

“But though extending over a very limited period, there is reason to believe it effectually secured the immediate object contemplated, namely, the exclusion of rival traders from the “country.” And again, in explanation of the same state of things, they add that, “up to the cession of Canada to Great Britain, they continued in undisturbed possession of the territories to which they laid claim.” Thus, for a period of sixty-six years, or of two generations of men, after the expiration of the Act of 1690, the Hudson's Bay Company had not even a shadow of a reason for invoking again the aid of the Imperial Parliament, more particularly as a succession of temporary confirmations would have gradually weakened the inherent force of Charles the Second's Letters Patent.

But, not to rest satisfied with the *argumentum ad hominem*, an argument not very conclusive as to the merits in dealing

with parties so reckless in their assertions, other grounds, certainly more authentic and perhaps not less solid, may be urged in explanation of the "extraordinary" fact. Without making any formal appeal on the subject, the Hudson's Bay Company has never failed to obtain, whether from the Crown or from Parliament, a recognition of its chartered powers on every occasion, which seemed to call for such a safeguard. In the beginning of Anne's reign,—within a few years after the Letters Patent, according to Robson and his copyists, had expired,—the Charter was exempted from the operation of a Statute for opening the trade to the American Colonies; in the days of George the Second, it was saved from any possible interference on the part of any intending discoverer of a north-west passage; in the time of George the Third, it was acknowledged both in the Quebec Act of 1774 and in the treaty of 1794, between England and America; and lastly, in the Statute of George the Fourth, which authorised the issuing of a licence for the Indian territories, it was revived, in the amplest possible manner; by the rider, after having been virtually extinguished on nearly every point but its commercial privileges by the enacting sections.

But, on the very face of "A Few Words," &c., the last-mentioned Act, in the most expressive terms, admitted the existence of that same monopoly, which, according to Robson and his restorers, had been dead and buried for a century and a quarter. The license of trade, which the Act in question authorised to be issued, was not to extend to any of the lands and territories previously granted to the Hudson's Bay Company; it was invested merely with an exceptional character; it was to take only what the Letters Patent, under a fair and reasonable construction, might leave it.

However "extraordinary" the fact might appear to the five authors of "A Few Words," &c., the Hudson's Bay Company might well be excused for being contented with so long and continuous a series of the highest confirmations of its title.



2. As already mentioned, the last two paragraphs of "A Few Words," &c., treat of the results of the Honorable Company's trade.

The first of the two paragraphs states that, "the yearly revenue"—"from all sources"—"averages £200,000 per annum, the profits upon which amount to £110,000." Now even this brief and simple statement teems with misrepresentation. In order to establish this point, I need merely compare it with a passage quoted in the pamphlet itself, from the writings of an individual not very likely to favor the Honorable Company. "The entire value of all the furs and other articles traded by the Company from the Indians, in all its territories and possessions, averages LESS THAN £200,000 *per annum*. In one year it amounted to £211,000, and "the nett profits for that year were declared at £119,000." It is manifestly from this original, that the copy, with an awkward kind of art, has been deliberately garbled.

But, even if the statement were correct in the letter, it would still be erroneous in the spirit. The paragraph in question prefaces its assertion as to the revenue and the profits, by saying that, "the entire stock in trade of the Company is not more than £400,000." Now, whatever the writers may have intended to express, the reader cannot fail to infer, that stock and profits are correlative terms; that the stock is the sole germ of the profits, and that the profits are exclusively divided among the stock. But, under the existing constitution of the Company's Fur trade, two-fifths of what are called profits go to the chief traders and the chief factors, so as to leave only three-fifths to the stockholders. Thus would the £110,000 dwindle down, in the reader's amended arithmetic, to £66,000; the 27½ per cent. would sink at once to 16½. Not one of the five pamphleteers could have been ignorant of this fact,—the very fact which had fed, and clothed, and educated them, either as heirs or as dependents of the recipients of the difference. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge and belief, both the revenue and

the profits, so far as the average is concerned, are very considerably exaggerated.

The authors of "A Few Words," &c., next declare their conviction that, with the exception of "the enormous rental" of 5s. yearly, "The Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly" "is not productive of the slightest advantage to the Budget" "of the mother country." With respect to the "enormous rental," the five shillings are all in the Company's favor, inasmuch as other foreign possessions pay no "enormous rental" at all,—a point too insignificant to be noticed, unless as a proof of the helplessness of the writers. Considering that they were "now in London," they might have ascertained that upwards of seventy years previously the revolt of the United States had established it as the fundamental principle of the Colonial relation, that no colony, whether under a monopoly or not, should be "productive of the slightest advantage to the Budget of the mother country;" and they might further have ascertained that, down to 1846, the Hudson's Bay Company's territories were the only dependency of the empire that had not been an annual burden on "the mother country" and her "Budget."

To make out any case at all under this head, the pamphlet amid much confusion of thought and indistinctness of language appears to assume, that the abolition of the monopoly must increase the commerce between this country and England. Now, so far, at least, as this side of the rocky mountains is concerned, the very reverse of this would be the issue of any such experiment. It was always obvious that, if the country were opened to general enterprise, men of sufficient capital to keep up a direct communication with England, would soon find it their interest to retire from the contest; but the experience of more recent years, during which the traffic between Red River settlement and the Mississippi has been wonderfully extended, must have still more decidedly convinced every thinking man, that our half-breeds, neither valuing time, nor dreading hard-

ship, would, if permitted, overrun the whole country, even to Hudson's Bay and the Frozen Ocean with American goods. Whatever might be the fate of "the valuable Mines of silver, "lead, and copper;" or of the "salmon, porpoise, and seal-fisheries;" or of the "thousands of droves of wild buffaloes "and horses;" or of the "good export-trade in wood, tallow, "hides, wool, corn," &c.; whatever might be the fate of all these inexhaustible sources of national and provincial wealth, the furs would, almost every skin of them, find their way to St. Louis, thus handing over, at once, the vitals of the land, and the affections of the people to the great and growing Republic.

To offer a remark on the benefit which England actually derives from the ~~existing~~ trade of the country, nearly the whole of the gross proceeds flows, directly or indirectly, homeward. With respect to the greater portion of the amount, this is self-evident; nor are the wages even of local labour, an exception to the general rule. Such portions of the same as may not have been discharged on the spot, in imported necessities, are payable in bills on London, being ultimately spent, generally speaking, either in Scotland or in Canada.

To come now to the closing paragraph of "A Few Words," &c., the five authors proceed to maintain that, "if England "derives no benefit from the establishment of the monopoly, "still less advantage is it to the natives of Rupert's Land." This assertion appears to be limited by the context to "their civilization, and moral and religious improvement." Now, however little may have been done in this way, the Hudson's Bay Company may safely challenge the empire to name any other dependency, or the world to point to any other region, in which savages have uniformly enjoyed so many of the blessings, and suffered so few of the evils, incident to the contact of barbarism and civilization. In these wildernesses alone, the aborigines have been neither extirpated nor expatriated. More may be done for their moral and religious improvement;

while all that can be done ought to be attempted ; but every attempt must fail that is not conducted in an untiring spirit of hopeful patience, with a due regard to the ruggedness of the soil, the severity of the climate, the resources of the country, and the habits of the wanderers themselves. Moral and religious improvement is a plant of slow growth, even under the training of the wisest and best of missionaries : in express terms, it implies a change in the man ; something which must be done through him with his own cordial concurrence, and which cannot be done for him by all the means and appliances in existence.

A parallel has been drawn between the aborigines of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories and those of Siberia, but the cases are not at all analogous. The Asiatic savages had never fallen into such a depth of barbarism as their American brethren ; and as soon as they fell under Russian domination, they were subjected to the coercion of an irresponsible despotism ; such as, even if it were demonstrably the only means of accomplishing the end in view, would be inadmissible in the eyes of Englishmen.

In one peculiar mode, perhaps, the only practicable mode of elevating aboriginal blood to the European level, this country stands unrivalled. Instead of inheriting, as in most countries, the condition of their mothers, the half-breeds of the north-west have almost invariably followed the fortunes of their fathers : instead of being abandoned as savages, they have been cherished as British subjects. This happy result is chiefly owing to the existence of the Company's privileges. So long as the Chartered Corporation possessed the legal monopoly of the trade, its rivals, whose only policy was to oppose might to right, were constrained to form a similar association. Thus, even under the influence of forcible competition, permanent servants of every grade were regularly employed on both sides ; and hence their descendants, the offspring rather of durable connexion than of casual intercourse, generally

occupied the recognised position of legitimate children in the hearts of their fathers.

Nor has the position of our mixed race, merely a collateral bearing on the merits of "A Few Words," &c. By ascribing the "memorial" to "those natives themselves," the closing paragraph of the article in question shows that the five writers, who are all of mingled origin, meant to include half-breeds as well as aborigines among those, to whose "civilization and moral and religious improvement," "the establishment of the monopoly had been still less advantage." With respect to the half-breed at least, such an assertion is not only incorrect, but can hardly be reconciled with either honesty or gratitude on the part of those, most of whom had received their education, and some of them more than education, at a local seminary established under a clergyman of the Church of England, and supported partly by the Company collectively, and partly by its individual servants.

#### IV.

Under this fourth and last head, I shall throw together a few observations on some of the more prominent points of the rest of the pamphlet,—the only mode of discussing, within the limits of a letter, a work, whose every sentence would require a page to unravel its intricacies, and confute its errors.

I. The memorial states, "that feeling the utter inadequacy of the remuneration for their furs from the Company, many of the more enterprising of the natives have formed a resolution to export their own produce and import their own supplies independently of the Company."

Perhaps the easiest and most satisfactory mode of annihilating this tissue of absurdity and disingenuousness is to exhibit the actual working of the Company's chartered monopoly of trade.

With respect to every article but furs and spirits, the Company has, for many years, practically surrendered its monopoly.

With these two reservations, it permits every one to export or import what he pleases, all import duties being paid, as well by itself as by others; and, with the view of encouraging the exportation of the productions and manufactures of the settlement in the only direction in which nature, by an immutable law, has not prohibited it, it lately exempted from all duties all the returns for the same imported from St. Peter's.

The practical benefits of the relaxation of the Company's rights can hardly be estimated by one not living on the spot. Every owner of the smallest possible capital, of *twenty* pounds for instance, or even of *ten*, may, and generally does, become an importer on his own account. If he choose to go to the United States in person, he has merely to follow a route which costs him nothing but his time. If his business or his inclination detain him at home, he brings his goods to his door in the same ship and the same boats as the Company's own; thus enjoying guarantees and facilities, which are practically denied to private individuals in almost any other colony.

In all this the private importer is even more favourably situated than the Company itself. Feeling no moral obligation to supply the community with a complete assortment of necessities, he neither adopts the Company's precaution of keeping a year's stock in advance, nor burdens himself with any of the heavier and more bulky commodities, generally the articles of indispensable utility. In addition to these advantages, which would render even the Company's prices more profitable to him than to the Company itself, he almost invariably fixes a higher tariff on his goods: and, what is still more, often adapts his tariff, in each case, to his opinion of the circumstances and necessities of the buyer.

But, further, those who thus share in the Company's privileges, bear by no means a due proportion of the Company's burdens. At least two-thirds of the expense of governing the settlement fall on the Company, over and above its municipal contribution in the shape of its import duties.

Moreover, the Company, besides calling these rivals into existence, virtually arms them for the contest. During the last four and twenty years, it has, in this settlement, uniformly discharged all its liabilities in notes payable in bills of Exchange on London,—notes which besides serving as a local currency to the people at large, are clearly more valuable to the private importers than the standard gold of the United Kingdom would be. In consequence of this inferiority, the Company's liberality has, with respect to the people at large, defeated its own benevolent object. The notes in question are hardly ever issued by a single dealer: so far as the whole body of merchants can prevent it, they have ceased to be a circulating medium. The paper is locked up: pound is added to pound, and shilling to shilling, till the time for sending off bills produces a general gaol delivery.

Perversely enough, the "Instructions to the Messenger," actually represent this matchless currency,—a currency which places Red River Settlement alone, of all the spots on earth out of London, at the very door, on the very counter, in the very coffers of the Bank of England,—not merely as a grievance, but even as a fraud.

This liberty of trading in general has, of course, been granted on the well-understood condition of not trading in furs,—a condition whose violation mainly led to the petition and all its appendages.—The individual in whose house the meetings were held, and also the "Messenger" or "Commissionary," had been prevented from receiving goods, which were to be lawlessly turned against the Company's interests. Even the reverend president had tried to obtain permission to take skins in return for provisions and in payment, to quote his own remarkable words, of "ecclesiastical retributions;"—the true grounds of his application on the subject being soon after illustrated by his becoming an importer, not only from England, but also in person from the United States, and by his allowing a confidential servant, in addition to her other duties, to sell his goods on his premises.

The reservation with respect to furs, and still more clearly with respect to spirits, is absolutely necessary, not merely for maintaining the Company's position, but even for promoting the welfare of all classes of the inhabitants of the country. To the aborigines competition would be ruinous, as, according to the admissions of the Imperial Parliament, it was before; to the hardier portion of our settled population it would be ruinous, inasmuch as the collecting of furs over the whole country in the character of houseless wanderers, a pursuit, which would speedily throw back even a more mature civilization into the depths of barbarism,—would furnish one mode more, in which their bones and sinews would become the property of their creditors; to the agricultural population it would be ruinous, for, to say nothing of the fatal fruits of past competition, the fur-trade, at present their principal, if not their sole market, would fall into the hands of those who would trust, like the savages themselves, for the supplies of the day to the gun or to the net.

2. To resume the consideration of the memorial, the next paragraph states, that, "the Hudson's Bay Company on the other hand claim whatever is limited on the British side of the line, distraining the goods and imprisoning the persons of those who refuse to accede to their prices." Now each of these three assertions is utterly without foundation. The only incident, which, during my residence of eight years, could give even a colour to the fiction, was as follows: an individual, who had imported goods from the United States, through the Company's relaxation of its own rights, was carrying part of them into a neighbourhood where furs constituted the only possible equivalent. His goods, being seized, were detained, till he gave security not to violate the very condition, on which he had been permitted to import them. Now compare this picture with that. The man was not, as the memorial would insinuate, a native, to whom the "land belonged" both by "birth and by descent;" if any "land did belong to him" both



"by birth and by descent," it was the French part of Lower Canada. The man was not put in gaol; his goods did happen to be so—in the absence of any better place of security.

3. To pass from the memorial to the petition, the thousand signers, in their second paragraph, complain that the promise of buying their produce which had been made to their fathers by Lord Selkirk had not been fulfilled by the Company. Now Lord Selkirk had very little to do, in a friendly way, with any of their fathers; while, if he had come under the obligation in question, very few of themselves, certainly not a tithe of the whole, have enough for their own consumption. So far from having any reason to make a grievance of the want of a market, the great mass of the petitioners either have nothing to sell, or sell what they ought to keep.

4. With respect to the administration of justice, the petitioners prefer no definite charge. Their insinuation of partiality is too general to be met in any other way than by a simple and absolute denial of its truth.

5. Finally, to come to the "Instructions to the Messenger," the sixth head alleges, that indispensable articles, such as gun-powder, thread for nets, tea, &c. are sometimes "transported to trade posts, afar, and even on the American territory"—the mention of "tea, in this absurd grievance suggests a curious reflection. It was not the Company, but the reverend writer himself that transported tea to "the American territory;" or at least, if the Company did transport it, it did so through the reverend writer, who, as a conciliatory favor, was indulged with a chest of Congo for the purpose at the very time that the tea was not sold, even in the smallest quantities to more loyal subjects. I was myself refused Congo on the very day thereafter; and perhaps I thought at the moment, that the Company deserved some such return of gratitude.

Consistently enough with the general course of the parties, the whole accusation about sending goods to "the American territory," recoils from the Company on its accusers. To say

nothing more of the reverend trader's share in such speculations, the individual, in whose house the petition was projected, and also the "Messenger" or "Commissionary," after having been allowed to export tallow, as if a production of the settlement, at a most inadequate freight, followed the hunters to "the American territory" with cargoes of tea and other perishable luxuries, thereby tempting them to neglect everything else for the article which could alone procure the means of personal gratification on the spot. Under such management, this "good export trade" in foreign "tallow," instead of clothing nakedness, according to its promise, would have sent home the hunter hungry as well as naked, and left what should have been literally his food and his raiment, the hides and flesh of the rifled carcasses to rot on the ground.

The "Instructions to the Messenger," under the eighth head, state that the Company is excepted from the laws which forbid the selling of intoxicating liquor to Indians. This is quite true; and the reason of the exception, as well as of the rule, is this, that the Company alone can be safely intrusted with the privilege; that the Company alone does not make rum an ordinary article of traffic; that the Company alone does not strip the thirsty savage of his last shilling and his last rag; and then send him out penniless and helpless and reckless to prey on the sympathies or the terrors of peaceable and honest settlers.

On the Rev. Mr. Beaver and Mr. Alexander Simpson, I need offer no remarks. Their vindictiveness is its own best antidote: neither of them writes in such a spirit, as to be thought capable, by intelligent readers, of confining himself to the plain and simple truth.

I have the honor to be,

My DEAR SIR,

Your very faithful Servant,

ADAM. THOM.

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